Policy, Guidelines, Procedures and Standards

October, 1984

School Libraries

Alberta

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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

Quality school library services for Alberta students have been under study and discussion for almost two years. Following reaction to A Position Paper on School Libraries in Alberta, a statement of proposed provincial government policy was developed and distributed widely for response.

The large number of positive responses to the policy paper, and the high degree of concensus achieved, verify in all respects the conclusions of the more limited study carried out in conjunction with the initial position paper. The reaction to both papers provides clear evidence that:

1. The school library is perceived as an important issue.
2. There is widespread concern over the quality of library services available in Alberta schools.
3. There is a need for Alberta Education leadership and guidance.
4. The direction and intent set forth in the policy paper is strongly endorsed as an important step in bringing about needed improvements.

While the adoption of a provincial policy on school libraries is an essential first step, real improvement in the learning opportunities available to our youth will occur only when individual teachers, teacher-librarians, principals, superintendents, and boards of trustees accept a personal commitment to plan, develop, and implement the kind of school library program that meets the present and future needs of our students.

I am confident that local jurisdictions and their staffs will make the necessary commitment and will take early steps to meet the challenges of policy implementation.

Sincerely,

David King
Minister of Education

Policy, Guidelines, Procedures and Standards for School Libraries in Alberta

October, 1984

Background

The responses received with respect to *A Position Paper on School Libraries in Alberta*, which was distributed in April 1983, to all major educational stakeholder groups in the province, indicate that there is wide concern regarding the present state of school libraries and a strong perception that the quality of school library programs is deteriorating.

These findings are disturbing. *The Basic Goals of Education for Alberta* identify a number of important learner outcomes that serve as the primary focus for determining learning programs and activities. Research shows that the school library program can make an important contribution toward the attainment of a number of these goal statements.

Research also shows that a school library, no matter how good the collection, or how well staffed, is of limited value if it is simply additive, acting as a supplement to, or an enrichment of, the instructional program. To be educationally and cost effective, the school library program must be directly integrated into the school's instructional program so that it becomes a planned and purposeful learning laboratory.

In view of the responses to *A Position Paper on School Libraries in Alberta*, and in order to encourage improvement in the quality of library services available to students, Alberta Education believes there is a need for a provincial statement of policy, guidelines, procedures and standards to guide the development and implementation of effective school library programs in Alberta.

Policy Guidelines and Procedures for School Libraries

Policy

Students in Alberta schools should have access to an effective school library program integrated with instructional programs to provide improved opportunities for student achievement of the Goals of Basic Education for Alberta.

Guidelines

1. School library programs should be integrated with the goals and objectives of the school's instructional program as set forth in the statement, *The Goals of Basic Education for Alberta*.

2. School library programs should be developed and implemented to meet and preferably to exceed the recommended minimum standards for school libraries as set forth by Alberta Education.

3. The development, implementation and assessment of school library programs is the responsibility of local school jurisdictions.

4. Alberta Education will continue to fund school library programs through regular School Foundation Program Funds.

5. Alberta Education will assist school jurisdictions to maintain quality in the development, implementation and assessment of school library programs.

6. Alberta Education will encourage research and the application of new technologies, systems and/or procedures for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of school library programs.

Procedures

1. **To facilitate the development and implementation of integrated school library programs, Alberta Education will:**

   (a) **Develop, produce and distribute to schools and school systems recommended models for an integrated school library program.**

   (b) **Include in each subject area curriculum guide for new or revised programs, where relevant, suggestions and activities for integrating the library program with the goals and objectives of the curriculum.**

   (c) **Distribute lists of learning resources that are correlated with the programs of studies and which are suitable for school library acquisition.**

   (d) **Make available to schools and school systems descriptions of existing school library programs which illustrate effective library program development and implementation.**

2. Alberta Education (Media & Technology Branch) will review approved standards on a regular basis and update as necessary to meet changing conditions and needs.

3. Alberta Education (Regional Offices) will conduct assessments of the library policies, guidelines, procedures and programs developed by school jurisdictions.

4. Alberta Education (Regional Offices) will endeavor to provide consultative assistance to local jurisdictions to structure their own program development, implementation and assessment plans.

5. Alberta Education (Media & Technology Branch) will identify or produce professional resources and inservice materials for use by local jurisdictions.

6. School boards will develop local school library policies, guidelines and procedures in keeping with those set forth by Alberta Education.

7. School boards should require their schools to develop statements of goals and objectives of school library programs specifying how the schools intend to implement board policies, guidelines and procedures.

8. In accordance with the policies of the board, the principal, teacher-librarian, where available, and school staff, should plan the integration of the library program with the instructional program of the school.

9. Alberta Education, through the Media & Technology Branch, in consultation with appropriate referent groups, will identify major needs and make recommendations for research related to school library programs.

Standards for School Libraries

The standards recommended below represent a compromise between "what should be" as expressed in the literature and "what is realistically attainable" in terms of the present economic climate. They should be interpreted as minimum rather than desirable expectations.

Many schools have already achieved or surpassed these basic standards, but those which have not should develop a plan and a reasonable timetable for their implementation.

It is recognized that schools with very small enrolments will find it difficult, in the short term, to attain all the standards identified. These schools may need to proceed more slowly and make gradual improvements over an extended time frame.

A. Standards for School Library Program Development

1. The statement of policy approved by the school board (see Procedure #6. page 3) should include direction to schools relative to:

   (a) The role of the school library.

   (b) The responsibilities of the principal, teachers and library staff in library program development, implementation and assessment.

   (c) Guidelines for library collection development, staff allocation, and library services and facilities.

2. The school staff, under the leadership of the principal and teacher-librarian, where available, should:

   (a) Identify on a regular basis the goals and objectives of the library program. These goals and objectives should be stated in terms of expectations for student achievement.

   (b) Identify the resources available to meet stated goals and objectives and any additional resources that will have to be acquired to meet program and student needs.

   (c) Plan teaching/learning strategies for the utilization of identified learning resources.

   (d) Plan curriculum correlated activities and assignments that will give students ample opportunities to develop and master those library skills appropriate to their ability and maturity levels.

(e) Provide instruction in library skills, preferably as these skills are required to meet student needs or curriculum goals and objectives.

(f) Provide meaningful opportunities for students to develop the ability to gain information from a variety of information sources and to communicate to others through a variety of media types.

(g) Provide instruction in communications skills and AV production techniques.

(h) Provide meaningful opportunities for students to develop critical thinking skills.

(i) Develop student interest in reading, viewing and listening.

(j) Develop a budget for needed materials, supplies, equipment and services, based on identified library goals and objectives.

3. The school principal should facilitate on-going interaction and cooperation between classroom teachers and the teacher-librarian so so that the library program becomes an extension of the classroom and so that teachers and the teacher-librarian become partners in the overall instructional process.

B. Library Staff

1. Professional direction is critical to the development and implementation of an effective library program. Professional direction may be provided through a variety of alternatives:

(a) By a full-time teacher-librarian on the school staff.

(b) By a teacher-librarian with a part-time library and part-time teaching assignment.

(c) By a teacher-librarian serving more than one school in the district.

(d) By supervision by a school district (central office) teacher-librarian.

(e) By cooperative agreement with a Regional Library System.

(f) Where no teacher-librarian is available, by the principal and teaching staff of the school.

Note: (i) The minimum qualifications of a teacher-librarian should include teacher certification and successful teaching experience along with university credits in at least eight half courses in librarianship and instructional technology.

(ii) Active participation on the part of the principal and teachers in the implementation of the library program must increase as teacher-librarian time is decreased.

2. Qualified technical/clerical support should also be provided.

3. Professional and technical/clerical support should meet or exceed the following standards:

School Size	Teacher-Librarian	Technical/Clerical Support
150 Students	-	½ - 1
300 Students	½	½ - 1
500 Students	1	1
750 Students	1	1½ - 2
1000 Students	1	2
over 1000 Students	1½ - 2	2½ - 3

C. The School Library Collection

1. The basic collection should support the major content areas of the instructional program and represent a balanced range of student interests and needs, including the appreciation of literature.

2. The size of the basic collection should be dependent upon the total student enrolment served, the number of grades taught in the school, the number and types of instructional programs, and accessibility of relevant materials through regional cooperation, networking and interlibrary loan arrangements.

3. The basic library collection for a school of 250 students should include:

print and nonprint materials	...	4,000 titles
magazines	...	20
newspapers	...	2
pamphlets, pictures	...	to meet program needs
film/video, etc.	...	from Regional Film Centre, District IMC, ACCESS, etc.

Note: 1. The above represents an average basic collection for 250 students regardless of the type of school (elementary, junior or senior high). The high number of course offerings in junior and senior high is offset by more grade levels served in elementary school and the need for more books at the primary school level.

2. For schools with larger enrolments, the collection should be increased to meet the needs of the students and the instructional program.

3. The ratio of fiction to nonfiction and reference should range from 15% - 30% fiction and 70% - 85% nonfiction and reference depending upon accessibility and the nature of interlibrary loans available from other school, regional, public, college and university libraries.

4. The reference collection should include at least one current set of encyclopedia.

5. Schools offering programs in both English and languages other than English, should increase the basic collection to include a comparable standard of materials (print and nonprint) to support instruction in the language(s) offered.

6. Selection criteria for the library collection should be consistent with:

   (a) Guidelines for Tolerance and Understanding.

   (b) Controversial Issues Policy statement.

   (c) Canadian content priorities.

   (d) Identified library program goals and objectives.

   (e) Needs identified by students and teachers.

   (f) Information from recognized selection tools.

7. An annual school library budget should be allocated for the purchase of new materials, supplies and equipment (if equipment is not provided for in the capital budget or some other budget category). The budget should be determined on the basis of the funds required to realize library program goals and objectives. It should be recognized that smaller schools and schools offering programs in English as well as languages other than English will require a higher than average allocation.

D. Library Facilities and Equipment

1. Basic space requirements should be consistent with School Buildings Regulations and Guidelines as set forth by Alberta Education.

2. Space should be provided to accommodate the following functions:

   (a) independent, small, and large group study.

   (b) group instruction.

   (c) reading.

   (d) viewing and listening.

   (e) materials production

   (f) teacher planning.

   (g) convenient access to collection areas.

   (h) circulation.

   (i) displays.

(j) storage/processing/repair.

Note: Functional areas should be located to limit conflict between competing functions and to facilitate effective library practice.

3. Equipment needs for both production and exhibition of materials will vary with the type of program offered in the school. However, there should be sufficient numbers and types of equipment to support classroom, individual and small group utilization of non-print materials and to accommodate student and teacher AV production needs.